



New Jersey Attorney General's Office

Division of Criminal Justice

Peter C. Harvey, Attorney General
Vaughn L. McKoy, Director

News

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

John R. Hagerty
Division of Criminal Justice
(609) 984-1936

**DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE - CASINO PROSECUTION BUREAU CHARGES
VIRGINIA LAWYER WITH LAUNDERING \$250,000 AT ATLANTIC CITY CASINO**

**Defendant Listed As Fugitive... Wanted in 3 States... National Search Underway...
Report Confidential Information To Division Of Criminal Justice Fugitive TipLine
1-866-TIPS-4CJ**

TRENTON - Attorney General Peter C. Harvey and Vaughn L. McKoy, Director, Division of Criminal Justice, announced that the Division of Criminal Justice - Casino Prosecutions Bureau has charged a Virginia lawyer with laundering more than \$250,000 in stolen funds through an Atlantic City casino. The charges, which include second degree money laundering, result from the theft of more than \$436,000 from a Virginia law firm.

Attorney General Harvey noted that the Division of Criminal Justice, in concert with the Division of Gaming Enforcement, targets theft, fraud and illegal activities that impact New Jersey's casino industry. "The Attorney General's Office is committed to aggressively pursuing casino-related crime. Anyone who violates the strict rules governing financial transactions in New Jersey's gaming industry by attempting to launder stolen monies through Atlantic City casinos will be identified, arrested and prosecuted," said Attorney General Harvey.

According to Criminal Justice Director McKoy, a State Grand Jury indictment obtained by the Casino Prosecutions Bureau charged Robert Short, 37, North First Street, Arlington, VA, with money laundering and receiving stolen property. Short faces up to ten years in state prison and a fine of up to \$150,000 if convicted on both counts of the criminal indictment.

Short is a fugitive from justice and has been placed on the Division of Criminal Justice "12 Most Wanted Fugitive List." Short is a white male, 6'0" tall and weighing approximately 225 pounds. He has brown hair and brown eyes. Anyone with information on the whereabouts of Robert Short is encouraged to contact the **Division of Criminal Justice Fugitive TipLine at 1-866-TIPS-4CJ (1-866-847-7425)** or State Police Det. James Pearson assigned to the Casino Investigations Bureau at (609) 441-7464. All information will remain confidential.

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“This indictment alleges that the defendant hatched a scheme to deposit a quarter million dollars in stolen funds on deposit with an Atlantic City casino and, after a minimal loss at the gaming tables, to withdraw the cash and flee the state,” McKoy said.

The State Grand Jury indictment alleges that on Feb. 21, 2003, Short wired \$250,000 from a personal checking account to the Taj Mahal Casino. On Feb. 22, it is alleged that Short arrived at the Taj Mahal Casino and withdrew a \$10,000 casino marker. The investigation determined that Short gambled briefly at roulette and, after losing approximately \$1,000, withdrew the remaining \$240,000 from the casino. The investigation revealed that Short had no gambling history at the Taj Mahal Casino and, given the minimal gaming activity, casino authorities notified the Division of Gaming Enforcement of the suspicious activity.

On March 4, law enforcement officials from the Thomas County Sheriffs Office in Colby, Kansas, contacted the Division of Gaming Enforcement/State Police Casino Investigation Bureau regarding Short. On Feb. 26, Short’s vehicle was stopped by Colby County Sheriffs Officers patrolling I-70. The subsequent investigation by the Thomas County Sheriffs office uncovered a quantity of marijuana, hashish, a semi-automatic handgun and \$207,000 in cash in Short’s vehicle. Short was arrested and charged with possession of illegal drugs and weapons violations. Short was released from custody on Feb. 27. The investigation next uncovered information that Short, a lawyer and former employee of the Law Office of Trapeni, Romero & Morrison in Fairfax County, VA, was wanted in VA on charges of forgery and theft. It is alleged that Short stole \$436,000 from the Trapeni law firm.

The investigation was coordinated by the Division of Criminal Justice - Casino Prosecutions Bureau, the Division of Gaming Enforcement and State Police Det. James Pearson. Additional investigative support was received from the Taj Mahal Hotel & Casino. Deputy Attorney General Kerry L. Menchen of the Division of Criminal Justice - Casino Prosecution Bureau presented the case to the State Grand Jury. The indictment was handed up to Mercer County Superior Court Judge Neil H. Shuster on Nov. 21. The case will be assigned to the Atlantic County Superior Court for trial.

An indictment is merely an accusation. The defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Additional information, including a copy of the State Grand Jury indictment and information on the Fugitive TipLine is available via the Division of Criminal Justice web page at www.njdcj.org.

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